

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended): A device comprising:

an industrial control unit operable to control one or more USB devices in an industrial plant;

~~an~~ one or more industrial control ~~panel~~ panels operable to communicate with said industrial control unit as ~~a~~ USB device ~~devices~~ and further operable to control various functions of the industrial plant;

a main USB hub connected to said industrial control panels; and

a communication link connecting said industrial control unit to said industrial control ~~panel~~ panels and operable to facilitate the communications therebetween,

wherein each of said industrial control ~~panel~~ panels comprises;

-a plurality of integrated functional units operable to respectively carry out the various functions of the industrial plant, each of the functional units being furnished with a respective USB controller; and

an integrated USB panel hub operable to inter-connect the USB controllers of the respective functional units.
2. (original): A device according to claim 1, wherein said industrial control unit comprises a USB interface, and said communication link is a USB line that is connected to the USB interface of said industrial control unit.

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3. (original): A device according to claim 1, wherein the functional units are input and output components.

4. (currently amended): A device according to claim 3, wherein the functional units are selected from a group ~~comprising~~ consisting of an operator keyboard, a touch screen input unit, a status display, a key display, a touch pad, a roller ball, and a piezo pad.

5. (original): A device according to claim 1, wherein the functional units comprise a communication interface operable to connect additional control devices and output devices or for temporary connection of mass storage devices.

6. (original): A device according to claim 1, wherein a line length of said communication link is greater than 5 meters.

7. (currently amended): A device according to claim 1, wherein the main USB hub is connected to said industrial control unit via a two-wire connection.

8. (currently amended): A device according to claim 1, ~~further comprising:~~
~~an additional USB hub assigned to said control panel, wherein said additional integrated~~
USB panel hubs ~~are~~ being connected to the functional units of said control ~~panel~~ panels via a ~~first~~ respective USB ~~line~~ panel lines, and ~~connected to the functional units of at least one~~

~~additional control panel via a second USB line,~~ and connected to said industrial control unit via a ~~third~~ dedicated USB control unit line.

9. (original): A device according to claim 8, wherein said ~~additional~~ integrated USB ~~panel hubs are~~ hub is physically integrated into said control ~~panel~~ panels.

10. (currently amended): An industrial control ~~panel~~ system comprising:
one or more control panels each comprising a plurality of integrated functional units,
each of which is associated with a respective USB controller and wherein one or more of said
functional units is operable to control a respective function within an industrial plant;
and
an integrated USB hub operable to inter-connect said USB controllers of said functional
units; and
an external USB hub operably connected to each of said control panels via the respective
integrated USB hubs,

wherein said industrial control ~~panel~~ panels are connected to a secondary device via a
communication link operably connected to said ~~integrated~~ external USB hub.

11. (currently amended): An industrial control ~~panel~~ system according to claim 10,
wherein one or more of said functional units are input and output components.

12. (currently amended): An industrial control ~~panel~~ system according to claim 11,
wherein said functional units are selected from a group ~~comprising~~ consisting of an operator

keyboard, a touch screen input unit, a status display, a key display, a touch pad, a roller ball, and a piezo pad.

13. (currently amended): An industrial control ~~panel-system~~ according to claim 10, wherein said functional units comprise a communication interface operable to connect additional control devices and output devices or for temporary connection of mass storage devices to said industrial control ~~panel~~panels.

14. (currently amended): A method for sending control signals within an industrial facility, said method comprising:

providing an industrial control unit operable to control one or more USB devices within the industrial facility;

providing ~~an-one or more~~ industrial control ~~panel~~panels as ~~one of~~ the USB devices and comprising a plurality of functional units, each functional unit having a respective USB controller; and

operably connecting said industrial control unit to each of the plurality of functional units via a USB hub integrated within each of said industrial control ~~panel~~panels and having a panel connection with a corresponding connection for each of the functional units and a control unit connection for sending or receiving control signals to or from said industrial control unit via an external USB hub that is operably connected to the industrial control panels and to the industrial control unit.

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Claim 15. (canceled).

16. (new): A device according to claim 1 wherein said industrial control unit and said main USB hub are connected via a single cable.